

Noted
JSE

7 May 1965

INSPECTION GENERAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: ~~Mr. Applewhite~~

SUBJECT : Some Thoughts on Fitness Reporting

25X1
1. The quite unsatisfactory FR procedure in the Photographic Intelligence Division/CIA of NPIC which will be the subject of recommendations for changes in our forthcoming report has caused me to look at [] Fitness Report and Directions for Completing Form 45, FR. From this review I conclude that neither document spells out important policy aspects which might contribute to a more honest and meaningful preparation of FR's.

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2. From my observation and experience one of the problems with FR's -- and I am fully aware that this is not peculiar to the Agency -- is that the FR is generally considered an onerous if not distasteful task by rating officers and in many cases not much differently by the rated employee. At the heart of this problem lies the fact that too often supervisors begin their evaluation of an employee at the time they must execute the yearly FR exercise. "The continuous evaluation of the performance of employees by their supervisors" consists in too many instances of no more than a perfunctory filling out of the FR form. Neither [] nor Directions for Completing Form 45 spell out that the preparation of the FR must be the end, i.e., the written recording of the yearly evaluation cycle of each employee's performance by the supervisor. An actual working of the continuous evaluation of each employee by supervisors would result in FR's which contain no surprises for the rated employee except that the FR might be somewhat better than the employee expected. The FR would contain no mention of performance or behavior deficiencies unless they had been discussed with the employee well in advance of the preparation of the FR. In other words, the degree of meaningfulness and honesty of our FR's can, in my view, only be raised if supervisors can be persuaded to discharge their responsibilities by pointing out deficiencies to employees as they occur and simultaneously attempt to set a course for improvement. By following such guidelines it has been my experience that the later discussion of the FR presents very little difficulty since the rated employee is not faced with anything out of the blue.

Conversely, there is no need not to record weaknesses because they have not been discussed previously. On the contrary, in most cases, improvement has already occurred and can and should be so noted in the FR.

3. Another shortcoming in the existing policy paragraphs on FR's is the fact that they do not require the immediate supervisor to be the rating officer. The argument that in some instances supervisors are judged not to be able to write FR's is hardly valid since if the supervisor is not fit to write a FR, he is most likely also not fit to supervise others. By insisting that the immediate supervisor be the rating officer, it should be possible not only to get more factual and honest FR's but simultaneously to train first-line supervisors in the proper discharge of their responsibilities. Finally, by letting the immediate supervisor be the rating officer, it is not possible for him to disassociate himself from an FR which he did not prepare and undermine confidence in the supervisory structure above him.

4. Similarly defective is the practice that reviewing officials by and large do not show or discuss their comments with rating officers and rated employees. Particularly, reviewing officials who are in substantial disagreement with the rating officials' views should be required to discuss their disagreement(s) and their reason therefor with both the rating officer and the employee. I have seen too many instances where a reviewing official has seriously disagreed with an FR and neither the rater nor the employee were so informed. This is particularly bad when a reviewing official states that the FR rates an employee too highly and the employee cannot understand why he is low man at promotion time. Unfortunately, the Office of Personnel does not enforce the current requirement that a reviewing official "state whether or not he has discussed the evaluation with the rating official and the employee".


5. The above comments are based on principles to which many Agency managers/supervisors agree, but which only a minority practice. Instead of accepting as a fact of life that the format of the FR must be changed from time to time and thereby assume that a form or a procedure could per se achieve desired results, greater and continued emphasis of impressing supervisors with their responsibilities and with Agency policies and their philosophical underpinnings might be more useful and particularly so if hand in hand with this would go a better policing of supervisory performances on all levels. By and large I have not seen much real effort to overcome the shortcomings revealed during the 701 exercise. The acceptance of "Proficient" as the average rating for specific duties and overall performance and thereby officially encouraging the inflationary spiral and lack of honesty in the preparation of FR's shows to me that we postulate one thing but practice another. Despite this, efforts for improvements should obviously continue. This is one attempt.

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2	Earman		5/29	[initials]	
3	[redacted] Please				
4	See me				
5	[initials]				
6					
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APPROVAL		DISPATCH		RECOMMENDATION	
COMMENT		FILE		RETURN	
CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION		SIGNATURE	
Remarks:					
<p>To 2: If you think that my views have some merit, you might consider forwarding the memo to Emmet Echols. I would not go any further than that since this whole subject is after all quite controversial and I am quite aware that there exists no simple solution. In other words: at this point I don't view my memo as anything more than one man's views on the subject and a possible contribution to the continuing discussion.</p>					
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10 ^{May} ~~April~~ 1965
DATE

FITNESS REPORTS!

As  says, EFFORTS
FOR IMPROVEMENT SHOULD
OBVIOUSLY CONTINUE. ~

~~ARMAN~~

EARMAN *5/27*

note JSE query

5/27

RETURN TO:

*→ This is a good paper -
But what do you recommend?*